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**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

# Written statement* submitted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[17 February 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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# Pakistan: disappearances

1. Balochistan province, at this moment in time, may be said to be the place in the world where the largest number of enforced disappearances take place. The Supreme Court of Pakistan and several High Courts have recognised the high level of disappearances that take place in the province. However, neither the courts nor the government have been able to take any effective steps to stop the practice of enforced disappearances or even to bring down the numbers of such instances that take place. Conservative estimates place the number of enforced disappearances at between 10,000 and 15,000.

2. In response to the large scale enforced disappearances taking place in Balochistan a long march has been undertaken by the families of disappeared persons and their sympathizers calling for the recovery of the missing persons. The first leg of the march was from Balochistan to Karachi where the marchers walked for nearly 730 kilometers. The participants continued with the march despite of death threats being leveled against them. The marchers received warm welcomes throughout the journey where expressions of solidarity pointed out the brutal situation prevailing in Balochistan.

3. The government of Pakistan has refused to take any active steps to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It appears that the government is under pressure from the armed forces and the intelligence services to avoid any serious steps to discourage the practice of enforced disappearances as a counter insurgency measure against the people of Balochistan. The parliament has not held any serious debate on the issue of enforced disappearances despite of the Supreme Court and High Courts making some attempts to intervene in the issue.

4. The Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) draws the attention of the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances of the United Nations to intervene in order to stop the disappearances and the accompanying brutality such as large scale illegal abductions and the mutilation of bodies. As the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances is aware of the ongoing large scale disappearances through the interventions of many human rights organisations the appropriate response from the Working Group, as well as other UN agencies should be to cause a serious discussion with the government of Pakistan and to provide advice and any other technical assistance in order that the government may intervene more clearly and decisively to stop the ongoing practice of enforced disappearances.

5. The ALRC also calls on the international human rights community to treat the problem of enforced disappearances in Balochistan as one of the top priorities of the civil society organisations and to take appropriate with the government of Pakistan as well as the relevant authorities in their own countries and the relevant United Nations agencies.

6. The delay or failure to act under these circumstances will lead to the loss of lives on a daily basis in Balochistan.